

RESURGENT SOUTHERN SECTIONALISM, 1933-1955

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A student of the history of the United States during the twentieth century and especially since 1933, observing the sweep and power of the nationalizing movement, would unquestionably agree with the statement of Elihu Root made in 1905 that "our whole life has swung away from old state centers, and is crystallizing about national centers."¹ The overwhelming importance of the national government under Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal and Harry S. Truman and the Fair Deal has brought support for, and fear of, national control of nearly every facet of human life—agriculture, industry, communication, health, education, and social security—from maternity aid to death benefits, or, as the English phrase it, from the womb to the tomb.

The Great Depression, the Second World War, the cold war against Russia, and the hot war against Communism have caused a real revolution in the American philosophy and concept of government far removed from the Jeffersonian view that that government is best that governs least. Today the general attitude is, let the federal government do it. And this attitude has not been seriously checked by Republican control under President Dwight David Eisenhower. The Communist scare has led the federal government to employ undercover Federal Bureau of Investigation agents in school and college class rooms. And recent Supreme Court decisions have opened public schools, parks, golf courses, buses, trains, and public waiting rooms that had long been closed by Southern states to Negro citizens. Certainly the trend is away from state centers and toward control by the federal government.

But if we take a longer and backward view of our history we will find that the United States is in reality a federation of sections rather than a union of individual states. In politi-

¹ Quoted by Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of Sections in American History* (New York, 1932), 287. Hereinafter cited as Turner, *The Significance of Sections in American History*.

cal matters the states act as groups rather than as individual members of the Union and are responsive to sectional interests and ideals. They have leaders who, in Congress and political conventions, speak for the sections, confer and compromise, and form combinations to formulate national policies. In other words, party policy and congressional legislation emerge from sectional contests and bargainings. Congressional legislation is hardly ever the result of purely national considerations. And when we study the underlying forces of social and economic life and the distribution of political power in the Union we find that sectionalism antedated nationalism and that it has endured, although sometimes obscured by political forms, throughout our entire history.²

There are, of course, varying degrees of sectionalism. The most extreme form was that exhibited in the struggle between the North and the South over the slavery issue which saw the emergence of a Southern Nationalism that culminated in the organization of the Confederate States of America and the American Civil War. Gradually the wounds of that conflict healed and by 1900 the North and the South were once again united. The new national spirit was made manifest when Fighting Joe Wheeler and Fitz Hugh Lee, Generals C. S. A., led troops in Cuba during the Spanish-American War as Generals U. S. A.³ Legend says that General Wheeler forgot himself and, while charging up San Juan hill, yelled, "Come on Men! Give those Yankees hell." Even so, Wheeler and his men were American not Southern soldiers.

There is, however, another kind of sectionalism which, as Frederick Jackson Turner so interestingly pointed out in his *The Significance of Sections in American History*, has lain dormant but may, under sufficient provocation, gain vitality at any time. This sort of sectionalism does not threaten the unity of the nation, but it makes itself manifest through a feeling of distinctness and separateness from others—in a word, Consciousness of Kind. It may be of economic interest, of mores and customs, of public attitudes, of cultural patterns, or even a manner of speech. The tests of such section-

² See Turner, *The Significance of Sections in American History*, 321-322.

³ Paul Herman Buck, *The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900* (Boston, 1937), 306.

alism may be found in the methods by which an area resists conformity to a national pattern—by mental and emotional reactions, or by a combination of votes in Congress and in presidential elections. This type of sectionalism gives a distinctive quality to a region. In this sense New England, the Middle States, the Old Northwest, the Great Plains, the Mountain States, the Pacific Coast constitute sections no less distinct than the South. Each has its peculiar geographic qualities, its economic resources and interests, its particular political bent, and its own social and cultural patterns. One may not be able to define exactly their specific differences but they undeniably exist. Frederick Jackson Turner said that in this sense “one of the most avowedly sectional portions of the Union” was and still is New England. And he devoted five pages in his book to depicting her sectional characteristics.⁴ He noted that the Boston press has long urged the section to act as a political unit, and that the six states had formed a New England States Commission of seventy-two members, twelve from each state, that met in annual conference to formulate political and economic policies for the section.

But it is of the South I propose to speak. I believe that the Great Depression of the nineteen-twenties and thirties followed by the New Deal constituted the provocation that aroused the dormant sectionalism of the South. Southerners suffered severely during the depression and reacted violently to the New Deal. They either accepted FDR wholeheartedly and swallowed the New Deal hook, line, and sinker, or they hated Roosevelt and fought the New Deal stubbornly and viciously. The two points of view may be illustrated by the story of the public school teacher and the reaction of the governor of a southern state. The teacher, so the story goes, was drilling her pupils in the benefits derived from the New Deal and indoctrinating them in the Santa Claus like quality of Roosevelt. She asked, “Who gave us this beautiful new school building?” The children, properly coached, answered in chorus, “Mr. Roosevelt.” “Yes,” said she, “and who gave us

⁴ Turner, *The Significance of Sections in American History*, 329-333.

these fine desks, charts, maps, and blackboards?" The reply was, "Mr. Roosevelt." Having exhausted the objects inside the schoolroom, she looked outside and asked, "Who gave us the playground and its equipment of slides and swings?" "Mr. Roosevelt," they replied. And, finally, "Who gave us the beautiful lawn with its shrubs and flowers?" One youngster, his sense of justice aroused, cried out in a shrill, small voice, "God." Whereupon the other children shouted, "Throw that Republican out." Speaking for the second point of view, Governor Sam Houston "Sad Sam" Jones of Louisiana wrote: "New Deal policies . . . have continued to kick an already prostrate South in the face. . . . [President Roosevelt] has allowed his New Deal to close down the horizons of the masses of Southern people, increase their handicaps, darken their future; he has permitted a senseless policy to continue whose end result can only be to impoverish the rich and pauperize the poor."⁵

Let us examine the evidence of this insurgent Southern sectionalism. In what areas does it manifest itself? I believe it can be seen in every major field of human interest, and that it has been growing stronger ever since the early 1930's. But time permits a brief discussion of only a few fields, and I have chosen to present (1) Emotional and social attitudes, (2) Cultural life, (3) General welfare activities, (4) Economic life, and (5) Politics.

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES

The overwhelming and crushing defeat of the Confederacy in 1865 left the people of the Southern states with a defeatist attitude, an inferiority complex, a tender skin to criticism, and a fear of ridicule. The victor naturally dictated the patterns of life and looked upon the South as backward and uncivilized. Southerners were on the defensive and often found criticism when Northerners were merely stating facts.

This touchy attitude lingers on after ninety years, and in the 1930's Southerners, resenting Secretary of Labor Frances

⁵ Sam Houston Jones, "Will Dixie Bolt the New Deal?" in *The Saturday Evening Post*, CCXV (Philadelphia, March 6, 1943), 20. Hereinafter cited as Jones, "Will Dixie Bolt the New Deal?"

Perkins's statement that "A social revolution would take place if shoes were put on the people of the South," charged that she was "poking fun" at Southerners for their poverty and that she accused them of going barefooted like peasants and country yokels. "Why, even the mules of the South wear shoes," indignantly rejoined one Southern senator.⁶

In like manner they resented President Roosevelt's *Report on Economic Conditions in the South* and the President's statement that the South constituted the nation's economic problem number one. In truth this study was designed to explore economic conditions in the South and to point the way to economic recovery and prosperity. Nevertheless, civic clubs, chambers of commerce, state legislatures, governors, and representatives and senators in Congress roundly condemned the publication and adopted and presented resolutions of censure and protest to the Congress.⁷

More significant was the fear of the breakdown of social mores because of Roosevelt's interest in the advancement of the Negro. Governor "Sad Sam" Jones of Louisiana charged that it was the purpose of the New Deal to force social relations between the two races, and that Roosevelt planned to use World War II as an instrument to force social equality.⁸ Southerners heard, believed, and retold over and over again rumors that Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt was organizing Eleanor Clubs among Negro cooks and maids to get them out of the kitchen in order to force white women to perform the menial duties of housework. H. A. Jessen, secretary of the South Carolina Sheriffs Association, in an address before that body, declared that the attitude of the Roosevelt administration on race relations was "an insult to every white man and woman in the South." He said also that no South Carolina sheriff would dare call on the Federal Bureau of Investigation for

⁶ Stetson Kennedy, *Southern Exposure* (New York, 1946), 1-2; hereinafter cited as Kennedy, *Southern Exposure*. See also Thomas D. Clark, *The Southern Country Editor* (Indianapolis, 1948), 334; Virginus Dabney, *Below the Potomac: A Book About the New South* (New York, 1942), 25; hereinafter cited as Dabney, *Below the Potomac*.

⁷ Kennedy, *Southern Exposure*, 2-3.

⁸ Jones, "Will Dixie Bolt the New Deal?", 21.

fear that he "might commit an act that the Administration would consider unfair to its Eleanor constituents."⁹ Southerners declared that there was no race problem. They claimed that they understood the Negro and could get along with him if Northerners would only keep their noses out of affairs that did not concern them.¹⁰ This emotional reaction had both bad and good effects. On the one hand it led to an increase of mob violence and a renewal of Klu Klux activities; on the other it led to co-operation of whites and Negroes who organized the Southern Regional Council in 1943 that has done effective work in the improvement of race relations in the South.¹¹ Southerners still resent Northerners who come into the South to champion the Negro, especially when they feel that they are interfering in affairs in which they have no concern. Witness for instance the feeling aroused by the activities of the NAACP in the Till murder case in Mississippi.

A curious episode in Southern emotionalism was the revival of interest in the Confederate cap and flag. The cap was widely worn by children and teen-agers. The flag was waved by college boys and girls at football games, worn as emblems on their jackets and raincoats, and flown from their automobiles. Furthermore, Southern boys in the United States armed forces at various points throughout the world were reported to have flown the flag from United States warships or from their company and regimental standards. Both the flag and the cap became far more familiar than they had been at any time since 1900. Some Northerners reacted violently. The mayor of Newark, New Jersey, was reported in the daily press to have issued an order that anyone displaying either the cap or the flag in that city would be guilty of subversive action and would be punished accordingly.

⁹ Undated clipping, *The Charlotte Observer*.

¹⁰ *Morning News* (Dallas, Texas), November 20, 1944. See W. E. Debnam, *Then My Old Kentucky Home Goodnight* (Raleigh, 1955), 117-118, for a recent expression of this feeling.

¹¹ Charles S. Johnson and Associates, *Into the Main Stream. A Survey of Best Practices in Race Relations in the South* (Chapel Hill, 1947), 5-11.

CULTURAL LIFE

The 1930's also witnessed the development of a new regionalism in cultural life. It was made manifest in many ways—in scholarly organizations, informal groups, publications, literature, and official action in the field of education. In all of these there was particular emphasis on the South and Southernisms. For instance, there was organized in 1934 a Southern Historical Association with emphasis not on history per se but on Southern history. It was followed by the Southern Political Science Association, the Southern Economics Association, the Southern Sociological Association, the Southern Humanities Conference and the Southern Council on International Relations. And there were the Southern Book Parade, the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association, the Southern Training Program in Public Administration, the Southern Writers Conference, and the Southern Educational Film Production Service.

Emphasis was placed on the South both in name and content in a continuing stream of books and periodicals. The Louisiana State University Press began the new ten volume *History of the South* and the multi-volume *Southern Biography Series*. North Carolina countered with the *Southern State History Series* and a *Documentary History of Education in the South*. Both these and other University presses issued numerous excellent books dealing with the Southern region. The pre-Civil War *Southern Literary Messenger* was revived and new periodicals with "Southern" in the title flourished. Among them were the *Southern Review*, the *Southern Patriot*, the *Southern Magazine*, *The South*, *The South Today*, the *Southern Frontier*, and the *Southern Packet*. The *Journal of Southern History* refuses to publish any article that does not deal with the South. Even the federal government succumbed to Southern regional publication and issued reports on *Southern Economic Conditions*, *Southern Labor*, and *Southern Industry*. In fact, the South has become the best documented section in America.

Southern literary writers, as they did before the Civil War, turned their attention to the Southern region and the South-

ern theme. They wrote of the Southern Negro, the Southern poor white, the Southern frontier, Southern society, Southern glamor and romance, Southern drama, and even of Southern religion. Much of this writing was of excellent quality and there were Pulitzer Prize winners in nearly every field of endeavor. Among them are Julia M. Peterkin on the Negro, Caroline Miller and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings on the frontier, Margaret Mitchell on glamor and romance, and Paul Green on the drama. William Faulkner has won world-wide fame in winning the Nobel Prize in Literature for his analysis of Southern society. And the South has become in reality the literary capital of the nation.¹²

In education there was organized the Southern Regional Council with a Board of Control and central offices in Atlanta. Fourteen states joined in and made appropriations of more than \$1,500,000 the first year. It provided for exchange of students in medicine, dentistry, forestry, and veterinary science from one state to another.¹³ More recent is the Southern Fellowship Committee, with headquarters in Chapel Hill, administering a fund of several millions of dollars, and granting fellowships and research aid to graduate students and scholars on a regional basis. It might be noted, however, that this fund was made available by one of the national foundations.

GENERAL PUBLIC WELFARE

Liberal and progressive Southern leaders—ministers, journalists, educators, and statesmen—have been concerned also about the general well-being of the Southern people. It should be noted that there have been several Pulitzer Prize winners in this field as well as in literature. Among them are George E. Godwin of the *Atlanta Journal* for exposing vote frauds in Georgia; Louis I. Jaffe of the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* for advocating the rights of the Negro; Robert Latham of the *Asheville Citizen* for championing political independency

¹² See Donald Davidson, "Why the Modern South Has a Great Literature," *Vanderbilt Studies in the Humanities*, I (Nashville, 1951), 1-17, and Louis D. Rubin, Jr., and Robert D. Jacobs, *Southern Renaissance: The Literature of the Modern South* (Baltimore, 1953).

¹³ *New York Times*, September 5, 1950.

and liberalism; and W. Horace Carter of the *Tabor City Tribune* and Willard Cole of the *Whiteville News Reporter* for exposing the Ku Klux Klan activities in North Carolina in 1952-1953. For lack of time, two or three examples of work in this area will have to suffice, although the activities of leaders extend over a wide sphere—including farm tenancy, health, labor, education, civil liberties, race relations, law enforcement, and many others.

The Southern Policy Committee was organized in 1935 to investigate and publicize the need for reform in Southern life. From this committee came numerous short reports on the evils of farm tenancy, poor health conditions and the lack of medical care and hospitalization in the South, the burden of the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting on the poorer whites as well as Negro citizens in the Southern states, and the lower wages and longer hours of laborers in Southern industry as compared to those of workers in the North.¹⁴

The Southern Conference for Human Welfare, organized in 1938 in Birmingham and designed "to promote the general welfare and to improve economic, social, political, cultural, and spiritual conditions of the people of the South,"¹⁵ offered the Thomas Jefferson Award to the person judged to have done the most during the year for the betterment of the Southern people. Two winners of this award were Frank P. Graham, then President of the University of North Carolina, and Hugo Black, at that time United States Senator from Alabama, and at present Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Unfortunately, this organization fell under the control of the leftist group and was branded as Communist and subversive in a report of the United States House of Representatives Un-American Activities Committee, but was ably defended by Dr. Walter Gellhorn of Columbia University in the *Harvard Law Review*.¹⁶ While its aims were

¹⁴ Dabney, *Below the Potomac*, 306-308.

¹⁵ *By-Laws, Southern Conference for Human Welfare* (Nashville, 1946); Katharine DuPre Lumpkin, *The South in Progress* (New York, 1940), 228-230; hereinafter cited as Lumpkin, *The South in Progress*.

¹⁶ For a sympathetic appraisal of the Conference's work see Kennedy, *Southern Exposure*, 360-363. The report of the Un-American Activities Committee and Dr. Walter Gellhorn's article are summarized in *The Southern Patriot*, V (New Orleans, December, 1947), 8.

laudable, and while it did at first accomplish worthwhile things, its usefulness has dwindled away.

The Southern Tenant Farmers Union, organized when about sixty-eight per cent of Southern farmers were tenants and sharecroppers, was another such organization whose goal—improvement in the conditions of the rural farm work—was praiseworthy. But it too fell under the leftist control and consequently failed in its major purpose.¹⁷

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Civil War and Reconstruction left the Southern people poverty stricken. Certainly, if they were ever going to recover from the effects of that tragedy they should have done so by 1930. And, indeed, they had made rapid strides economically. Nevertheless, they had not been able to close the economic gap between them and the Northerners for the North had advanced just as rapidly as the South. Like the runner in a race who falls behind, the South must advance more rapidly than the North if it is to close that gap.

Smarting under poverty, Southerners were stung by what they believed were the taunts in the President's *Economic Report on the South*. Thirty Southerners, representing the fields of business, journalism, labor, law, education and religion, meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, declared that many of the ills set forth in the President's Report resulted from things done or left undone by the national government. "The nation's treatment of the South," these representative Southern leaders declared, "has been that generally accorded colonial possessions. The South does not ask a preferred status; what it asks is equality of opportunity within the Union."¹⁸ *The Manufacturer's Record*, published in Baltimore, Maryland, published a series of editorials designed to refute what it called "the stigmatic statement that the South is 'the nation's

¹⁷ Dabney, *Below the Potomac*, 129-130; Kennedy, *Southern Exposure*, 279-280; Lumpkin, *The South in Progress*, 130-132.

¹⁸ Quoted in an editorial "Equality of Opportunity Asked for the South," in *The Journal* (Atlanta, Georgia), January 17, 1939; hereinafter cited *The Journal*. Two books that emphasize the colonial status of the South are Walter Prescott Webb, *Divided We Stand* (New York, 1937) and A. G. Mezerik, *The Revolt of the South and West* (New York, 1946).

No. 1 economic problem.'” It attributed the pamphlet and the statement to interests and sections jealous of the South’s industrial progress, to Northern fear of losing factories to the South, and to “unworthy political motives.”¹⁹

Southern political leaders complained that Roosevelt and the New Deal did nothing to solve the economic problems of the South; rather they charged that the Roosevelt administration adopted policies that aggravated them. Governor Jones of Louisiana charged that the federal government continued to dole out only seven per cent of War Industries to the Southern states until the Southern Governors Conference threatened to bolt the party. Even then, said he, “rank discrimination continued” and only \$2,000,000,000 out of \$38,000,000,000 in war contracts went to the South. Richard B. Russell of Georgia charged in the United States Senate that disbursements of United States Relief Agencies through November 30, 1938, amounted to \$78.80 per capita. The amount in the Southern states ranged from a low of \$28.40 in North Carolina to a high of \$69.50 in Florida. In contrast eighteen Northern and Western states ranged from \$81.00 in Wyoming to a high of \$127.00 in Montana, and New York received \$106.80 per capita. Russell charged and supported his charge with figures that a similar disparity existed in the wages paid Southern and Northern WPA workers. For instance, the average paid North Carolina WPA workers was \$32.00 while those in Rhode Island were paid \$84.63. Similar disparities existed in the AAA payments to Southern corn and cotton growers and Western corn and wheat growers, and in PWA grants to the states. These conditions, charged Russell, magnified the inequalities that originally existed between North and South.²⁰

In 1942 Representative Wright Patman of Texas blasted the Congressional War Plants Corporation, established to aid manufacturers engaged in war or essential civil production, for having “accomplished virtually nothing in the South.”²¹ Others complained that such war industries as were

¹⁹ *The Manufacturer's Record*, CVII (Baltimore, August, 1938), 13-14.

²⁰ Quoted in *The Journal*, February 4, 1939.

²¹ *The Durham Morning Herald*, December 7, 1942.

established in the South consisted largely of training camps and ship yards that would of necessity fold up with the coming of peace whereas the industries established in the North were heavy goods and tooling industries that would continue to benefit the North long after the war was over.

And Southern born Thomas Parran, Surgeon General of the United States and a noted figure in public health service, charged that the federal government spent 40 cents per capita for public health but that the highest expenditure in the South, where the need was actually the greatest, was 23½ cents in Florida.²² Still others charged that of \$400,000,000 spent during the war for research by the federal government less than five per cent went to Southerners.

While irate Southerners complained others went to work and organized the Southern Economic Council, the Southern Industrial Council, and the Southern Association of Science and Industry whose purpose was to influence industrial and economic progress in the South. This latter body, under the leadership of Thomas Boushall, president of the Bank of Virginia at Richmond and an alumnus of the University of North Carolina, declared that "Southerners were . . . given to platitudinous observations rather than specific and dynamic action," that "the South was experiencing a multiplicity of mediocrity," and that "loyalty to traditions of the South interfered with southern zeal to solve Southern [economic] problems." The Association began a campaign to revitalize the South through education, an appreciation of the opportunities and resources of the South, and by an inventory of Southern resources. To achieve these goals it marshalled the ablest staff the South could produce. Its work was partially responsible for the increase in the number of industrial plants in the South from 34,143 in 1935 to 44,779 in 1945, and an increase in the value of manufactured products from \$7,500,000,000 to \$20,600,000,000.²³ Other such research agencies working toward the same general goal are the Southern Research Institute at Birmingham, the Institute of Textile

²² *The Journal*, February 4, 1939.

²³ *The Journal*, July 19, 1946.

Technology at Charlottesville, and the Herty Research Foundation at Savannah.

Notable advances have been made all along the line. The Southern Newspaper Publishers Association played a major role in the coming of the paper pulp and newsprint industry to the South. The TVA, a New Deal agency, has done much to develop hydroelectric power and to diversify industry in the South. Able and aggressive industrialists have led in the development in new industries as well as to expand textiles, tobacco, furniture, and other older industries. Cities and states through their industrial commissions have secured new industries, and by advertising Southern industries have enticed many Northern plants into the South. Now the shoe is on the other foot, and Northern states, industrialists, and labor leaders are protesting to federal authorities that the Southern states are stealing their industries.

In 1948 Lieutenant Governor Arthur Coolidge of Massachusetts, speaking to the Greater Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, charged that "Dixie Claghorns" were "kidnapping the Massachusetts textile industry." They were, said he, "robbing Northern Peter to pay Southern Paul." He proposed "to fire an opening gun in a new industrial war between the North and South."²⁴ And Seymour Harris, Professor of Economics at Harvard University and Chairman of the New England Governors Textile Committee, declared on November 9, 1955, that "The South is fighting the Civil War all over again in trying to take away our industry."²⁵ New England congressmen, led by John W. McCormack, Democrat, and Joseph W. Martin, Jr., Republican, both of Massachusetts, have organized to put an end to the dispersal of new defense plants. On March 20, 1955, they asked Defense Mobilizer Charles E. Wilson for preferential defense contracts.²⁶ In August, 1955, the New York *World-Telegram* "charged Southern states with assuming the role of a 'reverse carpetbagger' by attempting to entice storm-hit industries to rebuild in the

²⁴ *The Durham Morning Herald*, April 13, 1948.

²⁵ *The Durham Morning Herald*, November 10, 1955.

²⁶ *New York Times*, June 27, 1951, March 20, 1955.

South."²⁷ Governor Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut declared: "I can't imagine anything more ghoulish. . . . I am shocked that in this tragic time any Southern state would try to come and steal our industries. This is really a new low." Governor George Bell Timmerman, Jr., of South Carolina, wired in reply, "I am shocked that you would issue such a statement." Governors LeRoy Collins of Florida, Frank Clement of Tennessee, and Luther Hodges of North Carolina likewise expressed condemnation of Ribicoff's charges.²⁸

POLITICAL ACTION

Much of the new Southern sectionalism stems from political conditions. Long the region of Democratic Party supremacy, Southern Democrats largely dominated congressional committees when the Democratic Party controlled Congress. The South, too, could block the nomination of any unsatisfactory Democratic presidential candidate through the two-thirds rule. But FDR persuaded the Democratic Convention to abrogate this rule in 1936 and Southern Democrats thereby lost power. Forgetting that the Roosevelt Democratic administration brought them the chairmanship of nearly all the committees in both houses of Congress, four members of the cabinet, three Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, several top posts in the foreign service, the head of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and the chief presidential assistant, and resenting both Roosevelt's attempted packing of the Supreme Court and his attempted purge of conservative Southern Democrats in 1936, Southerners organized for opposition to the Roosevelt administration. They set up the Southern Caucus in Congress to keep a sharp eye on federal policies. They had in 1934 organized the Southern Governors Conference in an effort to secure unity of action in support of Southern economic and political interests. This latter body has been very influential in the partially successful fight on freight rate differentials between the Official or Northeastern states and the Southern Territory, the establishment of the

²⁷ *The Durham Morning Herald*, August 28, 1955.

²⁸ *The Durham Morning Herald*, August 26, October 23, 1955.

Southern Regional Educational Board, and the effort to secure new industries for the South.²⁹

Less successful but more vocal has been the Southern Governors Conference in its opposition to federal action in regard to the extension of the suffrage and civil rights to the Negro. When the Supreme Court struck down the white primary in 1944, state legislatures repealed all laws governing the primary. Some states adopted new constitutional restrictions—the Boswell Amendment of 1946 in Alabama for instance—but the Courts invalidated these. Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina adopted new registration procedures. Judge J. Waties Waring declared the South Carolina action unconstitutional. Today large numbers of Negroes register and vote in all the Southern states.³⁰

When Harry Truman advocated a broader program of Civil Rights for Negroes in 1948, many Southern Democrats refused to go along with his nomination and organized the State Rights Party, generally ridiculed as the Dixiecrat movement. Nominating J. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina and Fielding L. White of Mississippi as their candidates, the State Rights Party won the electoral vote of four Southern states and a very sizable popular vote in all the others.³¹ And in 1952 Southern conservatives, bitterly opposing the Loyalty Oath imposed by the Democratic Convention, refused to support Adlai Stephenson, the Democratic nominee, and, led by such men as Governor James F. Byrnes of South Carolina, Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, Governor Allan Shivers of Texas, and Governor Robert B. Kennon of Louisiana, Southern Democrats bolted the party and Eisenhower carried seven Southern states and secured a large popular vote in the others.³² Most of these disgruntled Southerners, however, are unhappy over the turn of events. They found no relief from the pressure for civil and equal rights for the Negro. Presi-

²⁹ Robert Alexander Lively, *The South in Action: A Sectional Crusade Against Freight Rate Discrimination* (Chapel Hill, 1949), 46-48; Dabney, *Below the Potomac*, 310.

³⁰ V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York, 1949), 625-637.

³¹ Alexander Heard, *A Two-Party South?* (Chapel Hill, 1952), 25-26.

³² *The World Almanac and Book of Facts for 1953* (New York, 1953), 50.

dent Eisenhower appointed Earl Warren Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and under his leadership the Court unanimously struck down the "separate but equal" idea of Negro education in the South. Today the Lower South is seething with unrest, and Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina have already taken steps to abolish the public schools. A special session of the Virginia legislature has been called to consider a proposal to amend the state constitution so as to legalize state aid to private education.³³ North Carolina, long known for its progressivism and its moderate stand on race relations, is aroused and divided. Governor Luther H. Hodges's effort to secure voluntary acceptance of segregated schools has brought considerable criticism in many quarters. His reference to the NAACP as an outside body has been particularly displeasing to the Negro citizens. More recently the North Carolina legislature's Committee on Education was reported to be considering a plan for the abolition of the state's public school system. What the solution of this difficult problem will be no one can with confidence predict. The future is undeniably dark.

The South has at least learned that it cannot expect support from the Republican Party on its segregation policy and has grown lukewarm to the Eisenhower administration.³⁴ Senator Lyndon Johnson of Texas has been working for some time to unify Southern Democrats, and the Southern Governors Conference at its meeting in Point Clear, Alabama, in October, 1955, proposed that Southern Democrats act as a unit in order to gain greater influence in the Democratic Convention and control both the platform and the candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency in 1956.³⁵

Jonathan Daniels, editor of the *Raleigh News and Observer*, has been highly critical of this sectional political attitude. He says that "No Southerner will ever be nominated

³³ After this paper was written the Virginia legislature passed by an overwhelming vote, 93 to 5 in the House of Representatives and 38 to 1 in the Senate, a bill to submit to the people a change in the state constitution. *New York Times*, December 6, 1955.

³⁴ See editorials "Republican Party's Impact on the Solid South," and "Any Signs that Two-Party South Is Imminent," in *The Durham Morning Herald*, October 4, 5, 1955.

³⁵ *The Durham Morning Herald*, October 18, 19, 22, 1955.

for the Presidency until he first becomes a national figure. . . . So long as Southerners . . . 'insist' upon seeking sectional advantage they will invite retaliation from every other section . . ." ³⁶ Thomas L. Stokes, Georgia's Pulitzer Prize winner columnist, also criticized the action of the Governors Conference. He declared that Southern Democrats were conducting a political civil war against the Northern wing of the party. "Only the South," said he, "still exists as a distinct political entity. . . . Nothing exists elsewhere in this respect—or 'The East,' or 'The Middlewest,' or 'The West.' Nor do you find politicians in those geographical divisions constantly planning, as they do in the South and as the governors did again here, to form a cohesive bloc to regain for 'the South' what is called its 'proper share' in the direction of the Democratic Party." ³⁷ But Stokes was wrong in regard to the unique character of Southern political sectionalism. Two days after Stokes made his observation Mid-western party leaders, meeting in Chicago, "organized the Mid-western Democratic Conference," and adopted a resolution demanding that the National Democratic Party accept and incorporate in its platform a series of planks recommended by the Midwestern Conference. ³⁸

I have recounted in some detail the story of the resurgence of a militant Southern sectionalism. But what does it mean? It seems to be a mixture of bad and good, a warning and yet a glowing promise. There is a very close, in fact an almost exact, parallel in this story and that of Southern sectionalism in the 1830's and 1840's. For lack of proper leadership and because of the breakdown of the processes of democratic government the people suffered the great tragedy of the Civil War. The South must see to it that that part of the story does not repeat itself; in fact there is no danger of that for the sectionalism of today has none of the aspects of Southern nationalism that characterized that of the nineteenth century. Southerners must see to it that discrimination against minor-

³⁶ See editorial, "The Senatorial Complex," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh), October 22, 1955.

³⁷ Thomas L. Stokes, "A Familiar Paradox," and "Feeling Their Oats Again," *The Durham Morning Herald*, October 21, 24, 1955,

³⁸ *New York Times*, October 23, 1955,

ity groups, whether of race, class, or creed, is ended, that the processes of democratic government are strengthened and broadened so that the government can cope with demagogic leaders and subversives at home and with Communists abroad. In doing this freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of individual action must be safeguarded and preserved. In other words the individual must be assured of the opportunity to develop along his own bent and must not be forced to conform to any fixed mold or pattern.

There is also a promise in the new sectionalism. Out of it have come during the last twenty years many good things. No other section of the nation has made such rapid strides in education, in industrialization, and in general economic well-being. No other section has produced so many significant literary figures. Along the entire front the South has been closing the gap and catching up with the rest of the nation. The South is today a new frontier, a land of hope and promise for the future to her own, and to the people of all America.³⁹ But there is still much to be done. The South is still economically poor, and poorly educated. It should make the best use of its economic resources to further the well-being of the people—all the people—rich and poor, black and white, tenant farmer and industrial laborer, the professional and the business man. It must educate its young people and give them an opportunity to make the most of their talents whatever they may be. It must close entirely the gap between North and South, both cultural and economic, so that the best Southern brains and leaders will not be drawn to the North by greater opportunities but will remain in the South to contribute to her progress.

The South must once again take her rightful place in national life. Between 1776 and 1860, with only one-fourth of the political people, the South furnished nearly two-thirds of the national political leadership—presidents, cabinet mem-

³⁹ For progressive changes in the South see, "The Deep South Looks Up," *Fortune Index*, XXVIII (New York, July-December, 1943), 95; Wilbur Zelinsky, "The Changing South," *Focus*, II (October 15, 1951), 1-5; "The Industrial South," *Fortune Magazine* (New York, November, 1938), 45. The latter article states that while the South may be "the nation's economic Problem No. 1" to the President it is "to many industrialists the nation's No. 1 economic opportunity."

bers, legislative policy makers, diplomatists, and jurists. Those leaders formulated national policies and translated them into action. They contributed largely to the building of America. Only when they put section above nation, denied to many equal rights and opportunities, and tried to curb freedom of thought and speech did they loose control. How can a political reformation be brought about? It can be done by the people. They must choose and elect to office militantly-aggressive liberal and progressive statesmen who will be concerned with the well-being, the prosperity, the happiness, and the progress of all the people of the South and the nation. Then will the promise of the new Southern sectionalism be fulfilled.